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RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH 1068

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: IMPROVED SECURITY IN QADISIYAH BODES WELL FOR POSSIBLE PRT  
DIWANIYAH RELOCATION FROM REO HILLAH TO CAMP ECHO IN DIWANIYAH

CLASSIFIED BY: Richard Cleveland, Deputy PRT Team Leader, REO Al  
Hillah, Department of State.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (U) This is a joint DS-PRT Diwaniyah cable.

¶2. (C) Summary: Iraqi general offers upbeat assessment on the improved security climate in Diwaniyah. MND CS Commander concurs but is concerned that Diwaniyah's Governor remains an obstacle to progress. MND CS Commander and 8th IAD General would welcome the relocation of PRT Diwaniyah from REO Hillah to Camp Echo. Diplomatic Security site survey (Septel) reveals no significant security obstacles that would preclude PRT Diwaniyah's relocation. End Summary.

¶3. (C) On December 4, Diwaniyah IPAO and REO Hillah RSO traveled to Diwaniyah for discussions with Major-General Farhood Uthman, Eighth Iraqi Army Division (8th IAD) Commander, and with Major-General Tadeusz Buk, MDN CS commander. A DS site survey was also conducted to assess whether there are any security concerns that would preclude PRT Diwaniyah's relocation from REO Hillah to Camp Echo.

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General Security Situation  
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¶4. (C) Uthman offered an upbeat assessment of the improving security climate around Diwaniyah. He believes that the current security situation is "positive," with Operation Lion Pounce succeeding in securing the city with numerous arrests of militia-affiliated fighters and the displacement of others.

¶5. (S) Uthman is concerned, however, that with recent success in Diwaniyah, militia fighters have moved further north, particularly Hillah. He would like to replicate in Hillah the success in Diwaniyah of Operation Lion Pounce.

¶6. (C) General Buk agrees that security in Diwaniyah is greatly improved as a result of Operation Lion Pounce. He said that, although prior to Operation Lion Pounce there were "no-go" areas of Diwaniyah, coalition forces could now move freely throughout the city without unacceptable risk.

¶7. (S) General Buk mentioned, however, that he believes Diwaniyah Governor al-Khudari is "helping the JAM." Buk asked us whether we were aware of any of the Governor's public statements that "coalition forces are worse than the militias." Comment: We are unaware of any such public comments by the Governor but do know that coalition forces and Governor al-Khudari do not have a warm relationship. End Comment.

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Potential PRT Relocation  
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¶8. (C) Uthman strongly encouraged the PRT's relocation from REO Hillah to Camp Echo. He pledged his support and that of his forces to maintain security for the PRT. Uthman said that the province particularly needs agricultural expertise that closer PRT proximity to Diwaniyah could provide. Uthman also mentioned that provincial authorities, particularly judges, need additional "experience and training."

¶9. (C) General Buk also enthusiastically encouraged the PRT's relocation to Camp Echo and pledged his support.

¶10. (C) DS Camp Echo site survey details will follow Septel, but, at this time, there do not appear to be any serious security shortfalls that would preclude a decision to relocate the PRT from the Regional Embassy Office in Hillah to Camp Echo in Diwaniyah. RSO Hillah advised there are no insurmountable security issues related to stationing the PRT at Camp Echo because the camp security situation is much improved since the last DS survey 16 months ago. However, the current period of relative stability at Camp Echo and Diwaniyah has only been enjoyed for the last two weeks. RSO recommends that a DS-approved security package be emplaced with the PRT to facilitate movement and augment static security.

CLEVELAND